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PUTTING OPPORTUNITY TO WORK

Every level of government has its own problems, and each of us tends to think that our problems are more important than the next fellow's. This has, in the past, led to a public policy of piece-meal solutions. As a consequence, it is becoming clearer and clearer that something has gone wrong.

Every level of government today collects more money than ever before; yet no level of government has enough to finance the programs and services that the people either demand or need. The federal government has spent itself into a debt so huge that the health of our national economy has been adversely affected. Our State government, while maintaining a surplus, has only done so by resisting the temptation to provide every service and satisfy every need and - as you all here know so well - our local governments are finding it harder and harder even to provide, maintain, and upgrade mere essential services.

All of this has happened while we Americans are enjoying the highest standard of living known to man. So, it appears that we have become the victims of our own success.

All of this has led astute observers of government to realize two things: no matter how much money is available, governments can always cite additional needs to justify asking for more, and the piece-meal approach to the solution of our problems is a complete failure. Throughout our nation, various governmental units are beginning to accept these observations. We in North Carolina must also think about accepting them.

In order to limit the ever increasing demand for programs and services, some states and many localities have begun thinking about limiting growth. This idea, of course, marks a fundamental change in our traditional attitude, for in the past, it has been traditional to think of progress as mere growth. Yet people are now beginning to realize that uncontrolled growth creates more problems than it solves. Bigger, they are now saying, is not always better.

The development psychosis, they are now saying, often produces more chaos than comfort. The price our nation has had to pay for this realization, however, is very high. Uncontrolled growth has given us our ungovernable cities and our underdeveloped rural lands. It has made city life and rural life both into a social problem. These two social problems are, however, really only one problem, for we will never solve the problems of our cities until we solve the problems of rural America. These problems are two sides of the same coin.

The recognition of this fact has led to the other realization that we cannot continue to solve our problems in piece-meal fashion. Our urban problems have been caused for the most part by the migration of people from the countryside to the cities. The result is over population in some places and under population in the others. Thinking of their problems alone, the nation's big city mayors are demanding the greatest share of our tax resources so that the people of their cities can be properly provided for. At the same time rural governments demand the greatest share of these same resources to make the countryside more livable. Of course, both groups cannot be satisfied - there cannot be two greatest sharers.

The only equitable solution to both problems is controlled growth.

We in North Carolina are lucky; our problems have not yet gotten out of hand. Our cities are not yet too large, and our countryside has not yet been totally abandoned. We can, by anticipating the problems of tomorrow, hopefully, avoid them. But, if we are to succeed in avoiding them, we must begin to attack them now, for all of the forces that have led to our nation's urban and rural problems are at work in North Carolina today. Many of you may have seen the CBS news special that featured the migration of young adults from our eastern North Carolina community of Scotland Neck. Our young people are abandoning many areas of our State, for they cannot live lives there that are consistent with the high levels of achievement they seek.

In order to settle our rural areas, it is not enough just to be able to provide our citizens with jobs. We must also provide them with essential services, good schools, good medical facilities, efficient means of transportation, and the means for good entertainment and recreation.

We must, in short, plan and prompt a resurgence of the small town as the solution to our otherwise inevitable urban and rural problems. We must do something to improve the small town, to sufficiently equip it with programs and services to make it attractive to industry and people. There is no reason why the small town cannot be a strong economic force in the future.

Government in a free society, however, cannot alone solve society's problems. The solutions to our problems require the cooperation of our people. So we in government must realize that we cannot legislate our problems away. We must resist the idea that another state agency, that bigger government or centralized control is all we need. What government can and must do, however, is distribute opportunity, and educate our people to take advantage of it.

If we are to equitably distribute opportunity, State government must do a number of things: First, it must engage in comprehensive planning. Every service that the State operates must be planned and continually replanned. The State in conjunction with our Regional Planning

Commissions must draft comprehensive land use plans that allot certain areas of our State for residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational uses. Only such planning will put an end to haphazard development and the piece-meal approach to our problems.

The need to set aside land for future recreational use is especially urgent. We must anticipate our recreational needs, acquire and set aside sufficient space for them while it is still available. If we wait until the need becomes obvious, available recreational sites will in all likelihood be too small and too inaccessible to large segments of our population.

Next, the State must allot its resources in order to implement this comprehensive planning. We must put opportunity where there is none and discourage the overdevelopment of any area. We must tie the States' enterprises into communities in ways that aid rather than hinder controlled growth.

Third, industries must be offered economic incentives to locate in underdeveloped areas. Such

areas already offer many advantages. They are not congested, large plant sites are available at reasonable cost, and unspoiled environment offers attractive residential areas for their employees. But, the most attractive motive to any industry is the profit motive. If we can make it more profitable for industries to locate where we want them, we will get the industries we want.

Finally, local governments must be urged and helped to provide the services that will lure workers to these areas. Local governments must provide the schools, the medical facilities, and the essential services that Americans have come to expect.

Unless we are successful in equitably distributing opportunity throughout our State, we cannot expect to ever avoid the adverse consequences of over and underdevelopment. And, if we do not avoid these, we will have failed to fulfill the promise of tomorrow.

Successful government in the last quarter of the 20th century will be government which solves the problems of the present by anticipating those of the future, which

gives all of its citizens equal protection under the laws, and which equitably distributes opportunity.

If we fail to do any of these, we will fail to do all of them, and neither North Carolina nor the United States of America can afford that kind of failure.